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EDITORIAL.

EDITORS, E. D. COPE AND J. S. KINGSLEY.

ENDOWMENTS for the support of original scientific research are becoming more frequent in this country. Mr. Thomas Hodgkin, of Long Island, has presented the Smithsonian Institution the sum of \$200,000, a part of which is to be devoted to investigations on the characteristics of the earth's atmosphere. He "reserves the right" to add \$100,000 to the original amount. The new Rockefeller University of Chicago is to have a large endowment from Mr. Rockefeller for original research. A bequest was made by the late William B. Ogden, of New York, for the purpose of endowing a school of scientific research. The sum, which is between three and five hundred thousand dollars, has been offered by the executors to the same Chicago University, and has been accepted by them. The Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences has been the recipient of several bequests within a few years whose aggregate is considerable.

These accessions of strength for scientific research are gratifying, and the manner in which the moneys are expended will be watched with solicitude. The administrators of money are frequently not acquainted with the actual needs of practical research, and their first impulse usually is to erect expensive buildings. The amount of money thus expended frequently cripples the working power of the institution. An undue proportion is sometimes spent on media of publication, of which already many exist in this and other countries. The real need of original research is the endowment of tenable positions for men. This proposition is self-evident, but it has been, nevertheless, too much neglected. But should this liberal course be adopted by such institutions, the question of the appointments to be made at once presents itself. Boards of trustees, being rarely occupied with scientific research, are not generally well informed as to the merits of investigators. It is sometimes difficult to obtain unbiased information even from investigators themselves, who are frequently more or less influ-

enced by personal considerations, rather than by absolute merit. One criterion may, however, be safely trusted as a guide in this difficult question. Let appointees always be selected on account of work actually done. In this way, and in this way only, can the actual merits of a candidate be ascertained. Moreover, let this work have been extended over several years, and not be measured by a graduating thesis or an essay or two. It is never safe to appoint men on the strength of what they are going to do. When rewards are conferred before services are rendered, the services are sometimes never performed. Especially should trustees be careful to distinguish between original investigators and the various kinds of middle men that are so useful in other capacities. Such are teachers, popular lecturers, and compilers of general or popular books; very valuable persons, but not the proper recipients of any part of moneys left for the endowment of original research.

From the same point of view the administration of the affairs of our academies of science, which are media of original research, becomes important. The custom, very general in this country, of electing to membership any person who is willing to pay the entrance fee, must necessarily have bad practical results, in the directions above referred to as incidental to a board of non-scientific trustees. Special scientific knowledge is required for the administration of museums, publications, etc., and these have too often fallen into the hands of totally incompetent persons. It is to be hoped that with the increase in the endowments of our academies of science the necessity of electing members for financial reasons will disappear, and that the membership will eventually be more appropriate to the objects for which such institutions are created.

—WE learn that the committee of entertainment of the Washington meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science had a surplus over expenses of about one thousand dollars. We have already referred (*NATURALIST*, 1891, p. 939) to some economical features of the management by this committee, and we are now presented with another illustration of

their thriftiness. In a circular recently issued the committee recommends that the surplus be presented to the Cosmos Club of Washington, for the purpose of endowing a library. We shall be surprised if the Cosmos Club adopts this suggestion, although the same gentlemen are members of both. As the money was subscribed for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and as the surplus was obtained by requiring the members to pay their own expenses on the excursions, it would seem that the association is the proper recipient of the money. It would no doubt be very welcome for any one of several objects.

—THE dates of issue of the numbers of the NATURALIST for 1891 are as follows: January, February 21st; February, April 2d; March, April 25th; April, May 23d; May, May 28th; June, June 27th; July, July 31st; August, September 11th; September, October 6th; October, October 23d; November, November 17th; December, December 22d.

RECENT BOOK AND PAMPHLETS.

AMEGHINO, F.—Monte Hermoso, Artículo publicado en La Nacion del 10 de Marzo de 1887.

—Contribucion al Conocimiento de los Mamíferos fósiles de la Republica Argentina, with Atlas. Actas de la Acad. Nac. de Ciencias de la Rep. Argentina en Cordoba. Buenos Aires, 1889.

AMMON, L. VON.—Die permischen Amphibien der Rheinpfalz. From the author.

Association of American Anatomists. History, Constitution, Membership, and the Titles and Abstracts of Papers, for the years 1888, 1889, 1890.

BEECHER, C. E. and J. M. CLARKE.—The Development of Some Silurian Brachiopoda. Memoirs New York State Museum, Vol. I., No. I., 1889. From C. E. Beecher.

BODINGTON, A.—Studies in Evolution and Biology. London: Elliot Stock. From the author.

CADY, A. C.—The American Continent and Its Inhabitants before Columbus. From the publishers, Gebbie & Co., Philadelphia.

CALDERON, S.—Sur les Modifications des roches de Moron (province de Séville). From the author.

CAPELLINI, G.—Sul Coccodrilliano Garioloide. Reale Accademia dei Lincei, 1889.

—Sulla *Balena etrusca*. Estratta delle Memoire dell' Accademia delle Scienze dell' Instituto di Bologna, Tomo III., Serie III.—Del *Tursiops cortesii* e del delfino fossile di Mombercelli nell' Astigiano. Do., Serie IV.—Delfinorinco fossile dei Dintorni di Sassari. Do., Tomo VIII., Serie IV.—Resti Fossili di *Dioplodon* e *Mesoplodon*. Do.,